



## **Tips for** Grandparents *who are* Raising Grandchildren in Illinois

These simple suggestions have been developed by the Task Force on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in Illinois to assist older adult caregivers in their efforts to provide quality care for their family's children. The Task Force can be reached through the Illinois Department on Aging's toll-free Senior HelpLine, **1-800-252-8966** (Voice and TTY).

### **CASA** (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

#### **What is a CASA volunteer?**

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained citizen who is **appointed by a judge** to represent the best interests of a child in court. CASAs work on behalf of children who are victims of abuse and neglect.

#### **What is the CASA volunteer's role?**

A CASA volunteer provides a judge with carefully researched background of the child to help the court make a sound decision about that child's future. As a child advocate, the CASA volunteer has three main responsibilities:

- 1) to serve as a fact-finder for the judge by thoroughly researching the background of each assigned case;
- 2) to speak for the child in the courtroom, representing the child's best interests;
- 3) to continue to act as a "watchdog" for the child during the life of the case, ensuring that it is brought to a swift and appropriate conclusion.

The CASA volunteer makes a recommendation on placement to the judge, and follows through on the case until it is permanently resolved.

#### **How does a CASA volunteer investigate a case?**

To prepare a recommendation, the CASA volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health providers and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history. The CASA volunteer also reviews all records pertaining to the child.

**How does the role of a CASA volunteer differ from an attorney?**

The CASA volunteer does not provide legal representation in the courtroom. It is important to remember that CASA volunteers do not represent a child's wishes in court. Rather, they speak to the child's best interests.

**How does the CASA volunteer relate to the child he or she represents?**

CASA volunteers also encourage the child to express his or her own opinion and hopes, while remaining objective observers.

Please contact your local office to find which services are available.

**CASA**

1100 N. Beech Street, #7

Normal, Illinois 61761

Phone: 309-452-3646

Fax: 309-452-4312

Toll free in Illinois: **1-877-CASA-NOW**

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